

**Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary  
Sanctuary Advisory Council**

**FINAL Key Meeting Outcomes**

**May 15, 2009**

**Casa Las Palmas, Santa Barbara, CA**

*Note: This document will be posted on line at <http://channelislands.noaa.gov/sac/minutes.html>. Audio recordings of this and other Council meetings are available upon request to [michael.murray@noaa.gov](mailto:michael.murray@noaa.gov).*

**Attendance:** At peak, fifteen of the Council's twenty-one voting seats were present (see attached attendance roster). Six seats were absent for the day: California Resources Agency, California Coastal Commission, Education, Business, US Coast Guard, and Ventura County. Public attendance varied from 7 to 16 people.

**Administrative Business and Announcements**

The draft key outcomes from the March 2009 meeting were adopted as final.

***Superintendent's Report***

Superintendent Chris Mobley provided a verbal Superintendent's Report. Based on feedback we received at the last SAC meeting and our need to streamline the operation, hard copies of Superintendent's Reports will be provided at every other meeting.

***Sanctuary Advisory Council Summit Report***

Chairperson Eric Kett reported on the Summit he attended in Alpena Michigan May 5-9 2009. Eric described the wonderful relationship the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary (TBNMS) has with the Alpena community, and appreciated that he was able to get a bigger picture of the sanctuary program. Eric said issues that were key at the meeting included sanctuaries as sentinel monitoring sites, ocean energy development, and ocean acidification, including the presentation that he and Mike Murray provided. Mike added that the CINMS advisory council continues to be viewed as a leader. Mike also mentioned that the TBNMS has an initiative to engage youth in their sanctuary with a youth working group called "sanctuary stewards."

***Council Member Announcements***

A number of Council members shared announcements (unrelated to meeting agenda items). Audio recordings are available upon request.

**Outreach Center for Teaching Ocean Science**

Laura Francis (CINMS), and Gay Larson and Scott Simon (UCSB) provided updates on the Outreach Center for Teaching Ocean Science, an education facility on the UCSB campus to be jointly operated by the UCSB Marine Science Institute and CINMS. They provided an overview of the building, its capabilities, and opportunities for student involvement. Gay explained that OCTOS needs \$3 million by September 2009 and another \$7 million by March 2011. Groundbreaking will be in October 2009 with a celebration in September. Gay asked for help reaching people or organizations that could help raise funds.

**Whale Ship Strikes**

***Incident Report on Recent Fin Whale Death***

Sarah Wilken (National Marine Fisheries Service, Office of Protected Resources) provided a presentation on the examination of the fin whale that arrived in Long Beach Harbor on the bow of a ship. Sarah explained that they were not able to complete a full necropsy but they were able to do an examination and take samples for analysis. Sarah also explained that the cause of death has not been officially stated because the report was not yet final but

that results of the exam (dent in side of whale, bruised area, lots of blood, shoulder blade crushed into fragments) point to ship strike as a likely cause of death. Sarah said the whale was freshly dead and was likely struck in or near the port. She added that the evaluation of the ship's course and speed is ongoing.

Council discussion focused on the species recovery plan and other sources of mortality, the lack of information about the population and its movement patterns, and the likelihood of whales being found if struck.

#### ***Update on 2009 Whale Season***

Sean Hastings discussed the plan to use aircraft resources for whale survey flights, including resources from the US Coast Guard and California Department of Fish and Game.

Elizabeth Petras (National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), Office of Protected Resources) explained that NMFS is revising the triggering condition used to move to "Scenario 2" within the CINMS/NMFS ship strike emergency response plan. Scenario 2, which triggers a NOAA request for voluntary ship speed reductions in the Santa Barbara Channel, may now be triggered based on aerial *or* vessel-based observations of whale concentrations. Aerial sighting confirmation will no longer be required if CINMS staff express confidence to NMFS in vessel based reports received from known captains, trained volunteers or whale researchers.

John Calambokidis (whale researcher, Cascadia Research) was in the audience and summarized his plans for research this summer, including whale photo identification and tagging. John explained that the blue whale tagging research aims to look at how the whales are using the shipping lanes, if they are feeding or transiting. He also shared an observation of a tagged animal that stayed in the shipping lane over one day, during which time 42 ships passed in close proximity. John reported that he continues to work with Megan McKenna on the use of Automated Identification System (AIS) data from ships. John also added that the whale dive data they are getting shows that blue whales are negatively buoyant when diving and therefore may sink if struck. This may indicate, he said, that not all whales struck will be observed.

#### ***Shipping industry outreach and education***

Peter Fischel (National Marine Fisheries Service, Southwest Regional Office) described his outreach efforts during meetings with the captains of ships at the ports of Los Angeles/Long Beach. He explained the types of conversations he had with them concerning the whale ship strike issue. Council discussion focused on the challenges the vessels face in receiving, understanding, and complying with the Coast Guard-issued Notice to Mariners, and how the information gained from these interactions can help inform outreach efforts and improve cooperation.

#### ***Longer term work by Council's subcommittee***

Sean Hastings wrapped up the agenda item by providing an update on the whale ship strike case studies being developed based on experiences in other regions. The case studies are in draft form and will be shared with the Council at the July 17<sup>th</sup> meeting.

#### **Public comment**

Shiva Polefka with the Environmental Defense Center suggested that perhaps the Notice to Mariners should mention the additional risk of ship strikes during night time. John Calambokidis from Cascadia Research expressed appreciation for CINMS and NMFS staying on the ship strike issue, suggested that we are probably only discovering a portion of the actual number of ship strikes, and stated take reduction plan development seemed warranted considering known levels of ship strikes relative to Potential Biological Removal levels for some species. Tony Knight, a school superintendent from Oak Park, explained that he is taking his students to the Channel Islands National Park and they will be working on the ship strike issue as part of an Edison challenge program.

#### **Proposed Resolution on Offshore Energy Projects within the CINMS**

Linda Krop introduced the Conservation Working Group's proposed resolution on alternative energy project development within and near CINMS (distributed to all). The Council discussion revealed that some members were not ready to adopt it as-is, and they had a number of suggestions and ideas. Fred Piltz helped the Council understand the recently settled division of authority between the Minerals Management Service and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission with respect to offshore wind and wave energy projects. Council ideas for the resolution included: how it might be helpful if the resolution made reference to its applicability to the current CINMS boundary; how for some the resolution seems to communicate more of a negative or neutral stance on ocean-based alternative energy development; the opportunity to explore the marrying of MPA and green technology concepts; an appreciation for the concept of sanctuaries setting a "higher bar" for project approvals within their boundaries; consideration of the resolution stating that such projects are not acceptable within current CINMS boundaries vs. "probably" not acceptable; and the view that such projects should be located anywhere but within a national marine sanctuary -- a place to be considered free from such intrusions per the letter of the law and meaning of the word. A lingering question for the group seemed to be, would such a project ever be acceptable within the current boundaries of the CINMS. The new ideas were too much to address and incorporate on the spot, so the Council agreed that these and any other suggested edits should be written up by Council members and sent to Shiva Polefka of the Conservation Working Group for compilation. At a later SAC meeting the collective edits would be reviewed and an updated version presented for Council consideration.

### **Management Plan Implementation**

Sanctuary Superintendent Chris Mobley framed the issue by stating that the management plan process began a long time ago and that the budget has remained flat or declined over the years. A current challenge, Chris said, is to meet the management plan goals within the constraints of the budget. Mike Murray followed with a handout outlining each action plan across categories representing those activities that the staff feel are and can continue to be implemented, those for which external support is needed and being sought, and those which are temporarily on hold due to funding constraints. Mike asked for input on prioritizing the action plans in light of the current budget. Council discussion focused on the following issues: long-term monitoring and the challenge in maintaining long-term datasets, the ability to enforce the discharge regulation, and the importance of social science monitoring relative to effects from the marine protected areas.

### **NOAA Twin Otter Aircraft**

Matt Pickett, Aircraft Operations Coordinator for the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, provided a presentation on the NOAA Twin Otter aircraft recently assigned to the west coast, including its capabilities and missions. Matt said that if the council provided a letter of support, he could share it with the NOAA fleet council to help in acquiring more flight hours next year. A majority of council members were interested in writing a letter, and it was decided that the action could be considered at the July 17<sup>th</sup> meeting.

### **Working Group and Subcommittee Reports**

Sanctuary Education Team. While no one from the working group was present, Mike Murray provided a brief summary of their meeting held on Wednesday May 14. They continue to discuss outreach to the shipping industry and Dan Powell will begin work on a flyer.

### **Future Meeting Schedule**

- Friday July 17, 2009 (SAC meeting, Ventura)
- Friday September 18, 2009 (SAC meeting, Santa Barbara)
- Friday November 20, 2009 (SAC meeting, Ventura)

**Meeting Attendance Roster, May 15, 2009:**

Kathleen Fitzgerald	Tourism	Present
Andrea Moe	Tourism - Alternate	Absent
Debra Herring	Non-Consumptive Recreation	Present
Perry Ferguson	Non-Consumptive Recreation - Alternate	Absent
Capt. Richard McKenna	Business	Absent
Vacant	Business - Alternate	---
Linda Krop	Conservation	Present
Greg Helms	Conservation - Alternate	Present
Bruce Steele	Commercial Fishing	Present
Vacant	Commercial Fishing - Alternate	---
Capt. David Bacon	Recreational Fishing	Present
Merit McCrea	Recreational Fishing - Alternate	Absent
Maria Petueli	Education	Absent
Jose Chicote	Education - Alternate	Absent
Dr. Robert Warner	Research	Present
Dr. Mark Steele	Research - Alternate	Present
Phyllis Grifman [Council Secretary]	Public At Large #1	Present
Amy Spandrio	Public At Large #1 - Alternate	Present
Eric Kett [Council Chair]	Public At Large #2	Present
Dan Powell	Public At Large #2 - Alternate	Present
Jacy Ontiveros	Chumash Community	Present
Alan Salazar	Chumash Community - Alternate	Absent
Peter Fischel	NOAA Fisheries	Present
Elizabeth Petras	NOAA Fisheries - Alternate	Present
Russell Galipeau	National Park Service	Present
Vacant	National Park Service - Alternate	---
CDR Jason Collins	US Coast Guard	Absent
LTJG Brittany Steward	US Coast Guard – Alternate	Absent
Dr. Fred Piltz	Minerals Management Service	Present
Donna Schroeder	Minerals Management Service - Alternate	Absent
Steven Schwartz	Dept. of Defense	Present
Walt Schobel	Dept. of Defense - Alternate	Present
Marija Vojkovich	CA Dept. of Fish & Game	Absent
John Ugoretz	CA Dept. of Fish & Game - Alternate	Present
Brian Baird	CA Natural Resources Agency	Absent
Amy Boone	CA Natural Resources Agency - Alternate	Absent
Steve Hudson	CA Coastal Commission	Absent
Barbara Carey	CA Coastal Commission - Alternate	Absent
Dianne M. Black	Santa Barbara County	Absent
Susan Curtis	Santa Barbara County - Alternate	Present
Lyn Krieger	Ventura County	Absent
Marilyn Miller	Ventura County - Alternate	Absent
Chris Mobley	Channel Islands NMS [non-voting]	Present
Paul Michel	Monterey Bay NMS [non-voting]	Absent
Karen Grimmer	Monterey Bay NMS - Alternate [non-voting]	Absent
Maria Brown	Gulf of the Farallones NMS [non-voting]	Absent
Brian Johnson	Gulf of the Farallones NMS [non-voting]	Absent